



H.R. XX, the Safer Schools Act of 2023 Detailed Summary

Sec. 1: Short Title: The Safer Schools Act of 2023

Sec. 2 Pilot Program for Grants for Independent Facility Security Risk Assessment and Hard Security Improvements

- Establishes a pilot grant program for public schools within the Department of Justice (DOJ) and is overseen by the Attorney General.

Sec. 2 (b) Independent Facility Security Risk Assessments

- Establishes a grant program that funds an independent facility security risk assessment for individual public schools. The grant will cover 100% of costs to conduct the assessment for schools that are unable to cover the cost to obtain one independently.
- The school must submit an application to the Attorney General that includes:
 - The size of the school
 - A report on the financial state of the school, including any Federal, State, or Local funds used in its budget
- Priority is given to schools that have experienced an event in which an individual has inflicted deadly harm or attempts to inflict deadly harm against multiple individuals
- A school cannot receive multiple risk assessment grants within a 5-year period unless there has been an incident at the school where there was an attempt to inflict deadly harm

Sec. 2 (c) Hard Security Improvements

- Establishes another grant program that will cover 50% of costs to make the physical improvements identified during the initial risk assessment. There are financial hardship waivers in order to remove the 50% match if a school is unable to come up with the funds.
- The school must submit an application to the Attorney General that includes:
 - The results of the school's most recent independent facility security risk assessment
 - The size of the school
 - A report on the financial state of the school, including any Federal, State, or Local funds used in its budget
 - A description of previous security improvements made at the school
 - The products and services that will be purchased with the grant funds, including an estimate of such costs and services
- Priority is given to schools that have experienced an event in which an individual has inflicted deadly harm or attempts to inflict deadly harm against multiple individuals.
- If a school experiences an event in which an individual has inflicted deadly harm or attempts to inflict deadly harm against multiple individuals, they are eligible to apply for the grant again.
- The grants can be used for the following:

- Make hard security improvements identified as necessary by the most recent risk assessment
- Install at least 1 silent panic alarm linked to the closest local law enforcement agency for use in a school security emergency, including a non-fire evacuation, lockdown, or active shooter situation, if a panic alarm is not already installed.
- Oversight of the grant program
 - Whomever conducted the initial risk assessment must certify that the products and services will help mitigate any shortcomings in the school's security that were identified.
 - All improvements must comply with local building code requirements and standards

Sec. 2 (d) Information Dissemination & (e) Reports

- The Attorney General shall disseminate to each local education agency in the country information about grant availability
- The Attorney General must verbally contact the head of a public school to let them know of their priority eligibility for these grants and offer technical assistance within 30 days of a critical event taking place in a school.
- All grant recipients must submit the results of their security assessment and a list of each hard improvement made to the DOJ
- There is also a reporting requirement to list of any critical events that occurred, and a school survey assessing how safe students/facility feel.
- The Attorney General shall submit reports to the appropriate Congressional committees on the breakdown of the type of hard security improvements that were made and outstanding vulnerabilities remaining.

Sec. 2 (g) Definitions

- Appropriate Congressional Committee – House Judiciary, House Ed and the Workforce, and Senate Judiciary and HELP
- Hard security improvements – improvements to the infrastructure of school property perimeter, building perimeter, entrance and exit points of the school, video monitoring equipment, alert notification equipment, the interior and perimeter of the classroom, and any other physical improvements related to the camera systems, alarm and notification technology, and visitor management technologies deemed eligible by the Attorney General.
- Independent Facility Security Risk Assessment – an assessment that identifies active shooter and related security vulnerabilities of public schools, considering security factors, including the strength and maintenance levels of the property perimeter, parking lot perimeter, building perimeter, and classroom perimeter. They must be conducted by an organization that is qualified by DOJ's Bureau of Justice Assistance Department.
- Public School – a public elementary or secondary school, including Indian tribal government schools.

Sec. 2 (h) Authorization of Appropriations

- Authorized for 5 years:
 - \$100,000,000 for fiscal year one
 - \$200,000,000 for fiscal year two
 - \$300,000,000 for fiscal years three through five

- 30% of funding made available for risk assessments and 70% of funding is made available for hard security improvements
- Sunsets 5 years after pilot program is established.